

Planning a space mission is a complicated matrix of people, hardware, and flight objectives. Knowledge Based Systems Inc. (KBSI) of College Station, Texas, designed project management software that allows NASA project managers to script activities for the Space Shuttle. The work was funded through a Johnson Space Center Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) contract. The Mid-Continent Regional Technology Transfer Center also helped KBSI locate federal funding to later commercialize the software, permitting it to move from demonstration level into production.

The software's analytical tools give users a way to gauge the impact of scheduling, monitoring, and managing subcontractors and suppliers. Cost variances in projects can be predicted and detected. Additionally, the accuracy and consistency of cost estimates are improved.

One early software success story involves a multibillion-dollar service provider. The company needed its new-hire process redesigned. A previous procedure took seven weeks to place a new employee on the job. That resulted in long cycle times, poor-quality products, and unhappy customers.

In another instance, for a consortium of major U.S. semiconductor manufacturers, the software developer provided computer tools to model, design, and optimize manufacturing processes. An advanced system to capture expert knowledge for design-to-cost analyses was also developed.

Founded in 1988, KBSI's initial mission was forward thinking: to advance the state of the art by developing creative solutions for a wide range of critical problems faced by government, academic, and industrial communities. The company has since evolved to set commercial and defense industry standards for the development and support of modeling, and analysis tools and methods.

The credo for Knowledge Based Systems Inc. is direct. Take control of how you do and what you do. Prepare contingency plans for when the real world waylays your best-laid plans. Manage risk by doing business better, faster, and smarter. In the end, KBSI's software promises its user that you can plan today for tomorrow's success.

